



Information about the Environment and for travellers in Crete:

Monastery Selinári and Selinári-Canyon **Bougainvillea (*Bougainvillea spectabilis*)**

Only a few miles behind the tourist town Malia is eastward the monastery and the church of the Ágios Geórgios of Selinari, directly (right) above the National Road towards Agio Nikólaos (sign-posted). Also all buses of the KTEL line Iraklion - Agio Nikólaos (and in reverse) stop at the monastery.

Several monks take care about the 1961 established again monastery, which accommodates behind its impressive stairway the monastic church (those unfortunately is often locked), a small chapel, the bell tower, a source and the George icon. The very much maintained plant appeals with the remaining monastery buildings and the shade donating trees like a small park and invites to stays. From here you also have a wonderful view over the Selinari Canyon and to the sea with Sissi, a small bathing resort at the north coast of Crete. At the 23rd of April, the name day of the protection patron, a large celebration takes place in the monastery. The monastery also domiciles a church retirement home, in which the today in Germany living Orthodox Bishop “Evmenios of Lefka” ¹⁾ 1977 served. Outside of the monastery is still another tiny chapel, which is sacred also to the Holy Geórgios ²⁾. It is located opposite the monastery on the other roadside; where a small stair leads down (which leads further on to the “Old route” (nearby north of the National Road) and here along (and through) the Selinari Canyon).

The pictures show impressions of the Monastery, e.g. staircase, Chapel, Church and courtyard area.





Pictures are showing a view from the Monastery over the Selinari-Canyon to the sea (Sissi) and a griffon vulture “starting” from the Canyon wall.

The broad tract of park in front of the monastery is strongly frequented particularly in the summer, when numerous tourists visit the plant. In addition, the Cretans insert here gladly an intermediate stop. This however not only, in order to ignite a candle in front of the George icon; allegedly there is the best Souvlaki of the island at the Selinari kiosk (directly left of the entrance of the monastery). At irregular intervals the tract of park (during the tourist season) is unfortunately also used as “market place” for all kinds of knick-knacks. Opposite the tract at the monastery (on the other roadside) griffon vultures

nest in the steep walls of the Selinari Canyon for decades. They are to observe easily and seen up close above all in the morning (flying over the Canyon) and in the evening (sitting in steep walls); in addition see also the info leaflet No. 022-04/E (page 2) and No. 114-05/E of the Crete environmental info. Unfortunately their existence decreases/goes back rapidly; from 5 breeding pairs (2001) to now only 2 breeding pairs (2005).

Finally here another note: “Please extreme caution when crossing the road” (particularly with children); the broad road is regarded of many road users as “island motorway” and is besides difficult visible by the curves (before and behind the tract of park at the monastery) and despite the existing zebra crossing a source of danger.

¹⁾ Bischof *Evmenios von Lefka* (worldlier name *Georgios Tamiolakis*) was born 1945 in Agios Charalambos (Lassithi-Plateau). In 1959 he joined as novice the Monastery Kroustalenia in Lassithi; 1964 he was sacred as monk and deacon. 1972 – 1976 study of theology at the University Aachen. 1977 ministry in the retirement home of the Monastery Selinari. His consecration to the bishop took place on the 15th of January 1994. Starting from 2002 he has, on resolution of all canonical orthodox bishops residing in Germany, the direction of the R.S.R. of the O.K.i.D. (Department for school and religious education of the orthodox churches in Germany)

²⁾ Lived in the 4th Century.



Bougainvillea (*Bougainvillea spectabilis*)

The Bougainvillea, whose German name is triplet flower, belongs to the kind of the miracle flowers from the family of the carnation-kind. Characteristic are the inflorescences, which consist of three bright red to red-violet high-days, which frame 3 white tube blooms, which look like stars. The durable, trailing climber, often with thorns reinforced, prospers particularly sumptuously on Crete (and in the mild Mediterranean climate). The richly flowering branches climb at walls (house walls), garden fences, trees and bushes. In the early 19th Century imported from Brazil to Europe, it is

cultivated on Crete frequently and decorates many buildings; in particular monastic yards.

Pictures: (5518, 5769, 5770, 5773/03.08.2005) *Ute Kluge* / (5497, 5499, 5505, 5510, 5511, 5515/03.08.2005) *H. Eikamp*